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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/12/2018
TAGS: [EUN](#) [MARR](#) [NATO](#) [OSCE](#) [PARM](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: RUSSIA'S EU EXPERT EXPOUNDS ON KOSOVO, ODIHR, AND
MISSILE DEFENSE

Classified By: A/DCM Grace Shelton for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (U) Dmitrij Poljanski, Head of the Russian Foreign Ministry's EU Affairs Unit and member of the Russian delegation in town for the Feb. 13 EU-Russia Troika, was the featured speaker at a Tuesday evening meeting of the Euro-Atlantic Council of Slovenia. After remarks on Russia's relationship with the EU, Poljanski took questions from the Slovene audience, most of them pointedly asked by seasoned veterans from Slovenia's political elite.

¶2. (U) Elections Observers: Former Slovene Foreign Minister Boris Ferlec asked why Russia had rejected elections observers. Poljanski shot back, "we absolutely welcome observers, but only if there is a clear mandate and criteria for their work." The problem, he claimed, is that criteria for their work." The problem, he claimed, is that ODIHR's rules were simply invented by its Director, never adopted by the OSCE< and they are not applied equally to all countries.

¶3. (U) Kosovo Independence: Former Delo Editor in Chief Mitja Mersol asked what Russia will do when Kosovo declares independence. Poljanski said, "This would be a deplorable step" that would "Carry consequences for the whole region, and create a momentum" difficult to contain. He said "there is now a status quo in Kosovo that prevents bloodshed and clashes," based on UNSCR 1244. Any action leading to independence, not mutually agreed to by all parties involved, would be against international law. If Kosovo declares independence, and the Kosovo Serbs decide to take action, "if KFOR stops that resistance they will break UNSCR 1244. This would be a fatal blow for international law and undermine the credibility of the UN itself."

¶4. (U) U.S. Missile Defense: Slovenia's former Ambassador to Russia asked why Russia had appointed a hard-line conservative member of the Duma as its Ambassador to NATO. Poljanski used the occasion to blast the U.S. missile defense initiative in Poland and the Czech Republic. "Unfortunately, it seems that the arms race has re-emerged." It started with the CFE, he explained, "Russia implemented it despite the fact that NATO never ratified it." He added, "it would be difficult to imagine that Russia would ever want to attack any of its neighbors -- no one wants a war, certainly not Russia; the destruction would be unthinkable." He noted, "we do not believe there is a theoretical threat from Iran, but if the U.S. and these other states believe these moves are

necessary, that is their right. But if the balance of power changes on Russia's borders, it is our duty and responsibility to make the same move." He said Russia "regrets having to do this, and is frustrated because we can't find an interlocutor on the EU side. When we try to discuss this, we are told that it is out of the EU's sphere of competence. We have the NATO/Russia Council, but that can't really deal with it."

15. (C) Comment: Poljanski spoke fluent English and responded to questions without hesitation (and scarcely without taking a breath). He was primed for these questions, and likely will deploy the same points in the EU-Russia Troika meeting today, where Kosovo is expected to be the lead item. His Slovene audience was polite, but skeptical.
COLEMAN